

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-24

WASHINGTON POST
28 June 1984

Jackson Says Cubans To Be Freed

Political Prisoners To Join Americans Set for Release

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MANAGUA, Nicaragua, June 27—Jesse L. Jackson announced tonight that President Fidel Castro would release to him 26 Cuban prisoners listed as political dissidents by Amnesty International.

The 26 would join 22 Americans now in Cuban jails—most of them on drug convictions—to leave the country with Jackson after he returns to Cuba Thursday night en route to Washington.

Jackson, who arrived here for the last scheduled stop of his four-nation tour, said Castro came to the airport to see him off and gave him a list of 26 Cuban prisoners to be freed. Castro had told the touring Democratic presidential candidate in overnight talks only of Cuba's willingness to free the American prisoners.

According to Jackson, Amnesty International lists about 50 political prisoners held in Cuban jails, but Castro chose to release only those guilty of what Jackson quoted him as saying were less "traitorous" crimes.

[Deputy White House press secretary Robert Sims said, "If it proves to be correct that he is able to obtain the release of any political prisoners, we would welcome that." A spokesman earlier had welcomed, "for humanitarian reasons," the announced freeing of the 22 Americans.]

Jackson said the U.S. Interests Section in Havana was seeking visas tonight from the State Department for the 26 Cubans as well as landing

rights at Dulles Airport for a Cuban aircraft that would transport the prisoners. Jackson indicated that these prisoners were not the political prisoners he had sought to have released in nearly six hours of negotiations with Castro Tuesday night.

Castro had said then he would consider Jackson's request for the release of 21 prisoners—not those announced tonight—whose names he had obtained from Cuban-American groups.

But tonight Jackson said Castro gave him a list of 26 prisoners whom he would free and Jackson directed his staff to take the names immediately to the Interests Section.

The extent of duplication, if any, between Jackson's 21 names and Castro's 26 was not known here. Jackson had no names with him and could not detail with what crimes they were charged in Cuba. He did not know how long any of them had been jailed.

Jackson, on arrival in Managua tonight, went to the U.S. Embassy for a briefing before beginning talks with Sandinista officials. He was scheduled to leave at noon Thursday for Cuba to pick up prisoners on his way to Washington.

The highlight of Jackson's day in Havana, his second there, was his visit to the Cuban jail to meet the 22 American prisoners being released to him.

"We do not come casting judgment about why you are here," Jackson told the 22 men dressed in green and black prison uniforms. "That's something the judicial process must handle. You are Americans and you are ours and we're going to take you home to your families and then it will be between you and your God and your families and the American judicial process to determine the next step."

Castro and Jackson had announced the release of the American prisoners and 10 "points of agreement" on bilateral and international issues at a post-midnight news conference following a lengthy meeting. The agreement included statements on improving U.S.-Cuban relations and encouraging negotiations to end the fighting in Central America, but it did not include the release of Cuban political prisoners or a decision by Cuba to participate in next month's Los Angeles Olympics, both requested by Jackson.

One prisoner who met with Jackson today, Dana Johnson, 28, of Miami, said: "I'm real damn happy to be going home." The men said that they lived fairly well in the Combinado del Este prison 13 miles from Havana. The prisoners gave Jackson a standing ovation and joined hands with him for prayer.

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